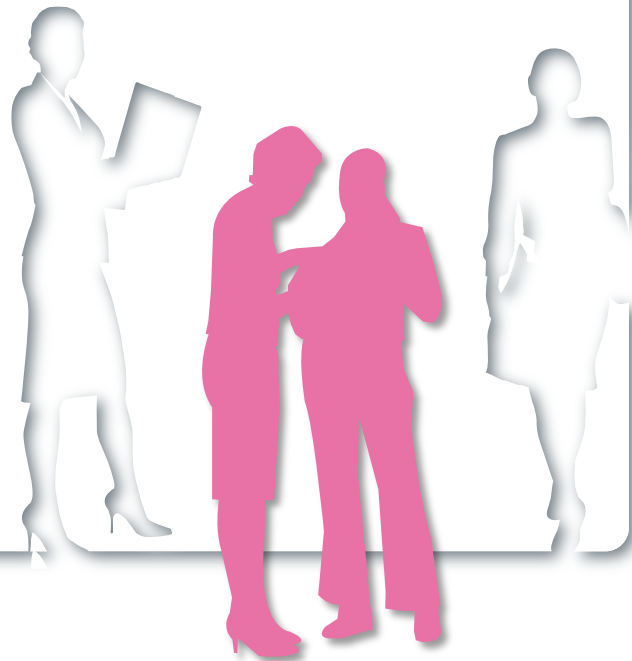


WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND ICT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

UFMS HEADQUARTERS
BARCELONA 26 MARCH 2015

Outi Karkkainen, European Training Foundation



ICT AS EMPLOYER: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Women and Work Study on Tourism and ICT in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia

Focus:

- Priority service sectors, private formal sector (decent work)
- School to work transition: young women (15-29 years) studying, working or unemployed and looking for job in one of the two sectors

Methodology: desk research, demand employers' (quantitative) survey in both sectors, supply side focus groups with 15-29 years old women

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is potential of tourism and ICT for creating jobs for women?
- If ICT and tourism companies do not employ many women, is this caused by problems in the demand or the supply of female labour?
- What impact does education have on women's employment in the two sectors?
- Is the labour market gender neutral?
- What can be done to ensure more women are employed in these sectors and in the private sector in general? What incentives are needed?

CHALLENGES

Challenges for working women

- combining work and family life
- non respect of labour legislation
- horizontal and vertical segregation
- less on-the job training opportunities
- negative social perceptions
- transportation & working hours
- sexual harassment

“I have specialised in networks but the manager of the company refused to assign me to work in that department and assigned me to other tasks where I do not have to go to the field because he feels the network department is for men”.

Challenges for ICT companies employing women

- financial costs
- organisational problems
- transport problems

“I have graduated with excellent grades in programming and received training and after that I applied to work in a company and I was offered the job but in marketing and not in programming”.

OPPORTUNITIES

Supply

- Women are almost as well represented in ICT studies than men
- Education choice: *“creative and challenging, good job prospects, characteristics both from literacy and scientific streams, fits what seen as female characteristics such as patience, good organisational skills and precision”*
- Most of the newly recruited are young university graduates

Demand

- Proportion of women among the employees of the ICT companies: 27% in Egypt, 23% in Jordan, 41% in Tunisia, i.e. > women's average labour force participation rates (EG 22% - JO 23% - TU 26%)
- Positive trend: ICT companies recruiting more women than their current share in the companies
- Most valued: 1. training and qualifications, 2 soft skills (few differences re. male valuation)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Positive employer attitudes
- Recruitment channels becoming more formal (advertisement, on line applications)
- Young women are confident in their abilities and qualifications
- Female employees give a positive image to the company, appreciated for their work with clients, patience and commitment

For consideration:

- ICT employers concentrated in the capital regions
- Young women need more professional advise, both for the choice of the study and during their time as students in order to gain more knowledge of the industry, its sub-sectors and what it is really to work there